

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PARIS 24712 182116Z

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-04 ISO-00 NIC-01 IO-04 CIAE-00 DODE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3371

INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY TANANARIVE

USMISSION USUN

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 24712

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CN, FR

SUBJECT: FRENCH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY VOTES FOR COMOROS
REFERENDUM

REF: PARIS 16122

1. ON OCTOBER 18 THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY APPROVED A BILL
SUBMITTED BY THE GOVERNMENT PROVIDING FOR A REFERENDUM
ON INDEPENDENCE TO TAKE PLACE IN THE COMOROS WITH 6
MONTHS OF THE BILL'S BECOMING LAW. THE VOTE FOLLOWED
LENGTHY ASSEMBLY DISCUSSION DURING WHICH A NUMBER OF
DEPUTIES EXPRESSED OPPOSITION TO THE GOVERNMENT'S
PROPOSAL FOR A GLOBAL VOTE WHICH, THEY SAID, WOULD
IGNORE THE DESIRES OF THE MAJORITY OF THE POPULATION OF
MAYOTTE TO REMAIN ATTACHED TO FRANCE. (DURING PRECED-
ING WEEKS, THE FRENCH PRESS CARRIED NUMEROUS ARTICLES
REFLECTING THE VIEWS OF THE MAHORAIS PARTY WHICH OPPOSES
THE INCLUSION OF MAYOTTE IN THE PROJECTED COMORAN
NATIONAL ENTITY. SPOKESMEN OF THE PARTY RECALLED A
1972 STATEMENT MADE BY THEN MINISTER OF OVERSEAS
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PAGE 02 PARIS 24712 182116Z

TERRITORIES MESSMER PROMISING MAYOTTE THE POSSIBILITY

OF INDEPENDENT SELF-DETERMINATION, AND ACCUSED THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT OF RENEGING ON ITS PROMISE AND OF SACRIFICING THE PRO-FRENCH COMORAN MINORITY.) THE GOVERNMENT STOOD FIRM, HOWEVER, IN SUPPORT OF THE AGREEMENT WHICH WAS CONCLUDED LAST JULY WITH THE CURRENT COMORAN GOVERNMENT (SEE REFTEL).

2. COMMENT: QUAI DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR AFRICA COMBAL TOLD US OCTOBER 16 THAT GIVEN THE OVERWHELMING AFRICAN AND THIRD-WORLD OPPOSITION TO DIVIDING DEPENDENT AREAS ON THEIR ACCESSION TO INDEPENDENCE, THE FRENCH HAD NO REAL CHOICE BUT TO ORGANIZE A COMOROS-WIDE REFERENDUM. HE ALSO SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT DID NOT TAKE TOO SERIOUSLY THE UDR OPPOSITION WHICH IT KNEW WOULD BE REFLECTED IN ASSEMBLY DEBATE.

3. THERE WILL PROBABLY BE ATTEMPTS BY THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT TO SOOTHE MAYOTTE FEELINGS BEFORE THE BILL IS VOTED ON BY THE SENATE AND THEN BECOMES LAW. HENCE, DESPITE THE PRESSURES WHICH THE UNGA WILL GENERATE FOR FRANCE TO GRANT EARLY INDEPENDENCE, THE DATE MAY NOW BE DELAYED UNTIL LATE 1975 OR EARLY 1976.
IRWIN

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